

Westfield Parks and Recreation Projects and Planning

May 14, 2007

Since I have started here at Westfield, the common theme has been "we want more parks; we need to develop the quality of life for the community". Thus it has been my goal to chart out the development of the department and how we will improve the quality of life here in Westfield.

Of course the major project that has been ongoing since I started is the updating of Quaker and Asa Bales Parks. This project was done with a bond for 1.5 million dollars and we have spent every dollar of that on these projects. At this point, it looks like both parks should be complete by mid May, if not sooner. We have landscaping to finish at both parks, with grass needing to be planted at Asa Bales. All other aspects of the construction have been completed. We will be developing a punch list with Cripe and Associates in the next week.

We have also had the Liberty Park construction going on. As it is known, this project is a mitigation and is being handled by the Kite Development. We are frustrated that this project which was suppose to take 45 day is now coming up on 9 months of construction. At this time we have been told that all that needs to be completed is the plantings, but they have to wait until it dries up to plant, so we have no idea when they will finish this project. Part of this project that we will need to handle is construction of a parking area on the south end of the property. The parking area was not included in the construction by Kite. Williams Creek, the general contractor, has offered to build a parking area out of porous concrete for around \$40,000.00. We do not have the funds for this and will be having a aggregate parking area constructed by our own personnel.

The first three months that I was in Westfield, was spent putting the department together. This included writing policies and procedures, putting in place ordinances to improve the operation of the department, and preparing for the future with planning and organizing.

We have also been aggressive in obtaining property for the department from developers. At this time we have three additional properties that we hold deed to that will be parks. Osborne Park is located on Ditch Road at 169th Street. This 35 acres has been designated a youth sports area and we wish to build a fourplex of baseball diamonds on the site. I have been meeting with Westfield Youth Sports, Inc. to discuss this area and how we can work together to get it built. We have had conceptual drawings done and will continue to move forward with funding this site. We hope to use the Visitors and Convention Bureau's grant to fund the engineering for this project.

We also have Armstrong Park on Countryside in the Countryside Subdivision. This 17 acre site has also been designated for youth sports and we hope to develop a soccer area here. This site is too small to be a replacement for Habig Fields, but will offer additional area for the teams to practice. It may be used for games if it becomes necessary. We are working with Westfield Youth Soccer on designating an area that could be used as a

replacement for Habig. The Habigs have been very generous with their land and allowing WYSA to use their facilities. At some point, this land will go to a developer, and the Town needs to be proactive in finding space for this organization to continue using. We would like to develop a large soccer complex that could be a draw on the regional level for large soccer tournament. We have had contact with US Soccer about the need for regional soccer facilities, and they have assured us that this would be a great place for such a facility. This will take around 100 acres in total, but would be a great economic development tool for attracting restaurants and hotels to the area.

The Woods at the Maples is a 6 acre site that has been deeded to us. This site is wooded and will make a nice area for trails and an arboretum. This site is located on 169th Street and Spring Mill Road.

We have also had commitments from two other developers for additional park land in the new subdivisions. Aurora has committed 24 acres to the town for a park. On this site, I would like to look at developing a revenue generating facility. A mini golf course on this site, which is close to the intersection of US31 and SR 38, would be great for this project. As we have also learned that the Eagletown project will be replacing the Driving Range on SR 32, this may be an opportunity for us to add a driving range to this project. The estimate for the mini golf course is around \$500,000 to develop including parking areas. I would estimate that it will take another \$50,000 to \$100,000 to develop a driving range.

The other site is in the Eagletown development. 25 acres has been committed to the town for a park. This site will need to be looked at to determine the needs in that area and how we can best use the site.

The last and biggest project that we have ongoing is the Monon Trail Project. This project has been continuing for 3 years, and will be at least another year before we see construction. We have been meeting with Butler, Fairman, and Seufert to discuss the progress and see if we can accelerate the time schedule. Our first mile is through a Transportation Enhancement Grant and will be constructed from 146th Street to 156th Street. We have applied for a second grant for the section between 156th Street and Highway 32. We also are discussing with developers about building the trail through their subdivisions to help move the construction along. I am also meeting with the Friends of the Midland Trace group to promote the construction of the Midland. This project is being looked at by the Township as a project that they may wish to finance. I will stay involved with the process.

I am meeting regularly with the director's from Hamilton County Parks and Recreation and Washington Township Parks and Recreation to discuss what is happening in our departments. We are working together to provide the best possible services to the residents of Westfield. We discuss any new projects that might be under way, programming and how we can work together on different projects. Since I have been here we have worked with Washington Township Parks and Recreation on their New Year's Eve 5K run, and they have worked with us on our Arbor Day Celebration. We

will continue to work together and offer the best variety of opportunities for the Westfield Community.

Our Arbor Day Celebration which was done in conjunction with Washington Township Parks and Recreation was very successful. We were able to plant 8 sunset maples at Quaker Park with the help of local Girl and Boy Scouts, along with the Key Club and Environmental Club from the High School. The clubs from the High School also helped us with our Tree Give Away. We gave away approximately 600 trees on Saturday, April 28. We will continue to hold this event every year, and would like to work towards establishing Westfield as a Tree City. I will be coming to you before the end of the year with a Tree Ordinance for the community that will guide us in tree care and planting in the years to come.

I have been asked by the Town Council to update the current 5 year Master Plan in Westfield. This is a project that will take several months, and will go into effect in January of 2008. The Master Plan will take citizen input through a park survey that is now online to determine Parks and Recreation needs for Westfield for the next 5 years. In addition to the online survey, we will be passing out printed surveys to all the third graders in the school system. This will give us a very good cross section of the community and their needs for Parks and Recreation.

We will continue to work towards a world class park system here in Westfield. We want to have many different opportunities for the community to use. Another part of this system is recreation programming.

We have begun to offer recreation programs to the community. We have begun Start Smart Sports, which is offering introduction to specific sports for the preschool age group. At the present time we are offering Start Smart Baseball. We have 20 three to five year olds learning the basics of baseball with their parents. We will be offering 4 other classes for soccer, football, basketball and golf. At the present time our soccer class is already full, but we may offer a second class if enough interest is shown.

We are also looking to the summer months and other programs that we can offer. We are contracting with outside organizations to help us provide the other programs. We are partnering with Off the Wall Sports from Carmel to offer a soccer class for 18 month to 36 month old children. This class will really be a child development program, based on soccer. We are also working with Adam Seif of Artistic Adventures to offer a basic drawing class for kindergarten through 5th graders. This class will meet once a week for 5 weeks and the participants will learn the basics of drawing in 3D. Motions, Inc. which is a Westfield firm is partnering with us to offer several programs this summer and fall. We will be offering two youth theater opportunities in the parks. We will also be letting the kids in the community have an opportunity for a Bike Rodeo and safety program. Lastly we will be offering a family program based on the television program The Amazing Race. This is a family event and we look forward to offering many other opportunities for families to play together.

Submitted by Curt Cooley